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THE DESIGN OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING, WITH EXAMPLES FROM THE PEACE CORPS.

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IN THREE ARTICLES ON THE DESIGN OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING WITH EXAMPLES FROM THE PEACE CORPS, HARRISON POINTED OUT THE INAPPLICABILITY OF THE CURRENT TRAINING FOR OVERSEAS SERVICE, DISSENTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITS ENDS AND MEANS. HE ARGUES THAT THE METHODS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO THE SITUATION WHICH REQUIRES THE ABILITY TO ADAPT TO UNFAMILIAR AND AMBIGUOUS SOCIAL SITUATIONS. TRAINING DESIGNED ONLY FOR UNDERSTANDING IS NOT ENOUGH. IT MUST REQUIRE THE PERSON TO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF PHENOMENA WITH WHICH HE IS TO DEAL AND TO TRANSLATE IDEAS AND VALUES INTO DIRECT ACTION, WITH RISKS. HOPKINS STATES THAT THE TRAINEE HAS NOT REALLY BEEN TRAINED FOR THE LIFE IN THE PEACE CORPS AND THEN SUGGESTS THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO WORK TOWARD THE CREATION OF AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL REWARD CREATIVITY. IN HIS SECOND PAPER, HOPKINS DESCRIBES A SUCCESSFUL TRAINING PROGRAM AT CAMP CROZIER, PUERTO RICO, IN WHICH THE EFFORTS OF THE TEACHERS WERE DIRECTED TOWARD ACTIVATING A TRAINEE'S WILL TO LEARN AND TOWARD CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT TO SUSTAIN SPONTANEOUS LEARNING. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL TRAINING LABORATORIES, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, 1201 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036, FOR $3.00. (SM)

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THE DESIGN OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING—
WITH EXAMPLES FROM THE PEACE CORPS

—*Roger Harrison*
—*Richard L. Hopkins*

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EXPLORATIONS IN HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Number Two - 1966

The Design of Cross-Cultural Training --

With Examples from the Peace Corps

by

Roger Harrison

and

Richard L. Hopkins

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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CONTENTS

1	The Design of Cross-Cultural Training: An Alternative to the University Model	Roger Harrison
30	Thoughts from the Rain Forest: On Alley Cats, Tame Tabbies, and Peace Corps Training	Richard L. Hopkins
41	"A Community of Learning" -- A Report on the Fall-Winter Training Programs, 1965, at the Peace Corps Training Center, Arecibo, Puerto Rico	Richard L. Hopkins

THE DESIGN OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE UNIVERSITY MODEL[1]

Roger Harrison

It is significant that of the institutions for higher learning in our culture, those concerned with education for performance in another culture seem most dissatisfied with traditional and current methods and most hungry for new ideas and innovations. It is significant because it is in the education for overseas performance that the desired training outcomes show sharpest contrasts with those of college and university education, while at the same time there is a great deal of content overlap.

The content of many of the traditional academic disciplines is directly relevant to performance in an alien culture. It is appropriate for the sojourner to know something of the history, political structure, cultural anthropology and sociology, social psychology and language of the country to which he travels. The acknowledged experts in these matters are to be found in universities and colleges. Yet there is growing dissatisfaction with the degree to which traditional teaching methods make this knowledge usefully available to persons who must use it in adapting to unfamiliar cultures.

There seems to be a lack of fit between the training methods and the application situation. Inapplicability of training has become a chronic complaint in organizations which must train large numbers of persons for service overseas. An example is the Peace Corps, where complaints about the irrelevance and nonutilizable character of traditional classroom training have been chronic since the early days of that organization.

If one listens carefully to the comments of returned Peace Corps volunteers, one finds that they do not appear to complain so much about the incompetence or inadequacy of the people who train them as they do about the inapplicability of the material itself. A typical comment is: "We had some fascinating lecturers in the program. Professor Smith was great on the politics of Central America. Somehow, though, when you go overseas none of it seemed to make much difference."

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[1]The author is greatly indebted to the then Director, Richard L. Hopkins, and the staff of the Peace Corps Training Center, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, for the experiences and discussions which stimulated the preparation of this paper.

If one is at all concerned about the relevance of higher education to life in our own culture these reports are more than a little disturbing. Here we have students who are, above all else, highly motivated to get the most out of a brief but intensive educational experience. They are keenly aware that their success in a strange and alien environment will depend upon their ability to grasp and deal with the dynamics of the culture to which they are to be assigned. They are well above average in commitment to their chosen task and they are high in energy level, imagination, and intelligence. Compared with the noneducational motives for which many students attend college, these trainees exhibit a most happy blend of attitudes and motives. Yet these highly motivated students seem unusually dissatisfied with their educational opportunities.

In this paper I shall attempt to dissect the relationship between the ends and the means of training for cross-cultural performance. The conclusion to which the analysis leads is that the methods of higher education in our culture are not well suited to the desired outcomes of such training. Nor are these traditional methods well suited to training for any application situation which requires the ability to adapt to unfamiliar and ambiguous social situations and to take action in those situations while under stress.

Beyond the analysis of this problem, I shall present a conception of the learning process in training for adaptation to ambiguity and action under stress. Design principles for such training will be presented and discussed, and an attempt will be made to specify the kinds of skills and competences needed to design and operate effective cross-cultural training programs.

The Diagnosis of the Problem

Let us examine the criteria of performance which are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the traditional educational experience. These criterion measurements are familiar to all of us. They consist of tests, papers, and reports, and sometimes performance evaluation on laboratory problems.

These methods of evaluation are primarily verbal, and they are almost exclusively intellectual. With few exceptions, formal systems of higher education in the United States

provide training in the manipulation of symbols rather than things; reliance on thinking rather than feeling and intuition; and commitment to understanding rather than to action. These systems are designed for the training of scholars, researchers, and professionals for whom rationality, abstract knowledge, emotional detachment, and verbal skills are primary values. These constitute the dominant foci of a "good" college or university education in this country today.

There are attempts to provide other kinds of learning experiences in most institutions of higher learning. Many of these are quite different from the classroom situation. They may be highly action-oriented and experience-based. These less intellectual, more emotionally involving learning settings are, however, peripheral and ancillary to the main work of the college or university. Student governments and student organizations, for example, have an ambiguous and unintegrated relationship to the administration, to the faculty, and to the classroom. Those professionals who are concerned with the conduct of these ancillary learning activities are not integrated with the "real" members of the faculty. They are seen neither as teachers nor as scholars and researchers. Their status is cloudy when it is not simply second class. The classroom remains a stronghold of rationality.

When colleges and universities are approached for help in designing or conducting training for work overseas, the resources which are made available to work on the problem are those of the traditional part of the organization. It is that part which is committed to and expert in training which is rational, verbal, and emotionally detached. The training design is usually based upon the university model.

This model has evolved over centuries of time. It is well designed to produce its intended results. Its goals and methods focus upon the development of the student's intellectual capacity. Students spend more time reading than they do writing; more time talking about ideas than acting upon them; and their professors are much more interested in students' ideas than they are in their feelings. To be emotional as opposed to being rational and objective in the classroom is to transgress the bounds of appropriate student or professional behavior.

Thus universities and colleges succeed rather well in influencing students to move in the direction of the goals outlined above. They do become more rational, more critical, more detached. They become more verbally fluent and more adept at the manipulation of words, symbols, and abstractions.

If we examine the desired outcomes of training for cross-cultural work, it appears that the university model is most helpful in transmitting facts and abstractions about another culture which a person must learn in order to have some basis for understanding the differences between it and his home situation.[2] Classroom education provides an intellectual understanding of cultural diversity, of values and assumptions which differ from our own.

In important areas of overseas performance, the traditional model offers little help. It is by now a truism that the human aspects of overseas work are at least as important as the technical ones in the success of a job or mission, that overseas personnel are much more likely to be deficient in these human aspects than in the knowledge and skills required to carry out their technical responsibilities.[3]

By "human aspects of work performance," we mean such functions as establishing and maintaining trust and communication, motivating and influencing, consulting and advising. These functions are not unique to overseas performance; the literature on management deals in depth with the importance of these relationship skills. There is, however, an added wrinkle in the overseas job: it is that the performance of relationship activities must take place across differences in values, ways of perceiving and thinking, and cultural norms and expectations. This means that even if a person has developed considerable skill in person-to-person relationships in his culture, there is still a good deal of learning which he needs to do before he can adapt his skills to operation across the cultural barriers. He cannot stop at knowing that the people he is working with have different

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[2]I am not referring to language training in this paper. Advances in the pedagogy of language instruction have been eagerly seized upon and adopted by cross-cultural training agencies. Therefore, the language training for overseas work bears less resemblance to the university classroom than does the training in other areas of the cross-cultural job.

[3]For an excellent review and statement of these human problems, see Foster, R. Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems Encountered by Americans Overseas -- Instructor's Handbook, HUMMRO, Alexandria, Virginia.

customs, goals and thought patterns from his own. He must be able to feel his way into intimate contact with these alien values, attitudes, and feelings. He must be able to work with them and within them, neither losing his own values in the confrontation nor protecting himself behind a wall of intellectual detachment.

These requirements suggest a very different set of goals from those of the university model. To sharpen the contrast, I have outlined some important and divergent goals of the two educational enterprises.

Some Major Goals of University Education	Some Divergent Goals of Overseas Education
Communication: To communicate fluently via the written word and, to a lesser extent, to speak well. To master the languages of abstraction and generalization, e.g., mathematics and science. To understand readily the reasoning, the ideas, and the knowledge of the other.	Communication: To understand and communicate directly and often nonverbally through movement, facial expression, person-to-person actions. To listen with sensitivity to the hidden concerns, values, motives of the other. To be at home in the exchange of feelings, attitudes, desires, fears. To have a sympathetic, empathic understanding of the feelings of the other.
Decision making: To develop critical judgment: the ability to test assertions, assumptions, and opinions against the hard facts and the criteria of logic. To reduce susceptibility to specious argument and to be skeptical of intuition and emotion. To search for the best, most rational, most economical, and elegant solution.	Decision making: To develop ability to come to conclusions and take action on inadequate, unreliable, and conflicting information. To be able to trust feelings, attitudes, and beliefs as well as facts. To search for the possible course, the viable alternative, the durable though inelegant solution.

Commitment: Commitment is to the truth. It requires an ability to stand back from on-going events in order to understand and analyze them and to maintain objectivity in the face of emotionally involving situations. Difficult situations are handled by explanations, theories, reports.

Ideals: The great principles and ideals of western society: social justice, economic progress, scientific truth. To value the sacrifice of present rewards and satisfactions for future advancement of these ideals and to find self-esteem and satisfaction from one's contribution toward distant social goals.

Problem solving: A problem is solved when the true, correct, reasonable answer has been discovered and verified. Problem solving is a search for knowledge and truth. It is a largely rational process, involving intelligence, creativity, insight, and a respect for facts.

Commitment: Commitment is to people and to relationships. It requires an ability to become involved: to be able to give and inspire trust and confidence, to care and to take action in accordance with one's concern. Difficult situations are dealt with by staying with them, trying to take constructive action.

Ideals: Causes and objectives embedded in the here-and-now and embodied in the groups and persons in the immediate social environment. To find satisfaction, enjoyment, and self-esteem from the impact one has directly on the lives of others. To be able to empathize and work with others who live mostly in the present toward the limited, concrete goals which have meaning for them.

Problem solving: A problem is solved when decisions are made and carried out which effectively apply people's energies to overcoming some barrier to a common goal. Problem solving is a social process involving communication, interpersonal influence, consensus, and commitment.

The goals on the left are not universally honored in American colleges and universities. They do seem to me to represent a spirit or ideal of academic excellence. They have a pervasive influence on the values and behavior of educators.

The goals on the right are typical of the aims of Americans working closely with counterparts in overseas situations. They are not universal, but they reflect the reach and thrust of many who are concerned and active in the improvement of overseas effectiveness.

The goals of university education and cross-cultural training are by no means directly congruent. This does not necessarily imply that the methods of the former cannot be applied to the goals of the latter. To investigate this question we must study what Schein and Bennis (1965) have called the "meta-goals" of training. By meta-goals we mean those approaches to learning, problem-solving, and personal development which the learner or trainee acquires in the process of being educated within a particular system. In other words, what does the learner learn, in addition to the content of instruction, about how to approach and solve new problems which develop in his daily life and in the world outside the classroom? What does he learn from his involvement in the formal training setting which will stand him in good stead in continuing to learn in the outside world? For example, one meta-goal deals with how the person learns to look upon authority in the learning and problem-solving process. In some learning settings a person learns always to look to some authoritative person or source for the solution to problems, while in others he may learn to look to peers or to himself for information and suggestions. Such differences can be quite important in overseas work, because the sources of information are quite different from what the person has learned to rely upon in the learning setting.

Below are listed some meta-goals of university education, contrasted with meta-goals which seem appropriate for the cross-cultural situation.

Meta-Goals of Traditional College and University Classrooms	Appropriate Meta-Goals for Cross-Cultural Training
Source of Information: Information comes from experts and authoritative sources through the media of books, lectures, audio-visual presentations. "If you have a question look it up."	Source of Information: Information sources must be developed by the learner from the social environment. Information-gathering methods include observation and questioning of associates, other learners, and chance acquaintances.
Learning Settings: Learning takes place in settings designated for the purpose, e.g., classrooms and libraries.	Learning Settings: The entire social environment is the setting for learning. Every human encounter provides relevant information.

Problem-Solving Approaches: Problems are defined and posed to the learner by experts and authorities. The correct problem-solving methods are specified, and the student's work is checked for application of the proper method and accuracy, or at least reasonableness of results. The emphasis is on solutions to known problems.

Role of Emotions and Values: Problems are largely dealt with at an ideational level. Questions of reason and of fact are paramount. Feelings and values may be discussed, but are rarely acted upon.

Criteria of Successful Learning: Favorable evaluation by experts and authorities of the quality of the individual's intellectual productions, primarily written work.

Problem-Solving Approaches: The learner is on his own to define problems, generate hypotheses, and collect information from the social environment. The emphasis is on discovering problems and developing problem-solving approaches on the spot.

Role of Emotions and Values: Problems are usually value- and emotion-laden. Facts are often less relevant than the perceptions and attitudes which people hold. Values and feelings have action consequences, and action must be taken.

Criteria of Successful Learning: The establishment and maintenance of effective and satisfying relationships with others in the work setting. This includes the ability to communicate with and influence the others. Often there are no criteria available other than the attitudes of the parties involved in the relationship.

At the level of meta-goals, university education and cross-cultural training diverge significantly. The sources, settings, and approaches of the former tend to be more formal, bookish, and dependent upon outside help than is desirable or feasible in the cross-cultural situation. The classroom emphasis on rationality also seems unlikely to develop the competence in learning through interpersonal contact which is required in so many overseas tasks.

These differences can be better understood if we consider the positions of university and cross-cultural education along two dimensions: freedom and encounter. By the dimension of freedom is meant the extent to which the learner's activities are controlled by himself or by some external source of authority and control. I contend that the high degree of control which is common in the college or university classroom is inappropriate for overseas training. This is not because freedom is a good thing and everyone ought to have as much of it as possible. Rather, the problem is that so much external control tends to create a dependency on experts and authorities for direction, information, and validation. Later, the learner is deprived of these sources of support in the application situation, because the authoritative resources needed to operate his accustomed learning method are absent and unavailable. The learner is in the uncomfortable position of not only having new problems to solve and new information to gather and evaluate, but of having to develop a whole new learning style pretty much on his own and unaided. This experience of not knowing how to learn may be productive of a good deal of the anxiety and depression which is known as "culture shock."

Education for cross-cultural applications should train the individual in a system of learning operations which are independent of settings, persons, and other information sources not found in the overseas situation. If he can be trained as an effective learner he need not be filled with all the information he needs before going to his new job. He will have the capacity to generate his own learning, as needed. In fact, the learner will have to do this for himself whether or not he is trained in effective learning procedures. It is simply not for the training agency to give specific training in every aspect of work and life in another culture.

The other dimension on which learning models differ is that of encounter, the extent to which the emotions, values, and deeper aspects of the self are actively involved, touched, and changed in the learning process. As most college graduates know, it is possible for a person to go through four or more years of higher education without having his values, emotions, or sense of self deeply touched once in a classroom. The

intellectualization and the formality, the emphasis on ideas and on the written word, the appeals to logic and reason, all combine to facilitate an emotional distance from the learning material and a relativism about values.

In contrast, it is not possible to maintain such emotional distance from the sights, the smells, the sounds, and the customs of an alien culture into which one has been suddenly thrust and totally immersed. Those aspects of life which in one's own culture are familiar, comfortable, and supportive (eating habits, standards of cleanliness, language, social usages) now have a continual disruptive impact at the level of emotions and values. One's assumptions and values are called into question again and again by the most trivial kinds of events. One can scarcely avoid the encounter, save by retreating into an isolated enclave of his own countrymen. Failing retirement into the seclusion of a compound, one must bear the emotional impact as best he can.

Education in the classroom teaches one to deal with emotionally loaded questions of value and attitude by analyzing them, talking about them, rationalizing and intellectualizing them. Such training tends toward the development of an attitude of detached observation, in which values are seen as relative to the backgrounds, assumptions, and situations of the participants. Such a scholarly, scientific attitude is appropriate to the task of <u>understanding</u>, but not to the task of <u>choosing</u>. A relativism of values must of necessity be violated when one has to commit oneself to acting on one competing value at the expense of another, and when one must reap the consequences of the action.

But there is a more serious disadvantage to the withdrawal from values and feelings and the intellectualization of them. By sidestepping direct, feeling-level involvement with issues and persons, one fails to develop the "emotional muscle" needed to handle effectively a high degree of emotional impact and stress. When, in the cross-cultural situation, the individual's efforts at detachment, objectivity, and rationality fail to protect him from the impact of an alien culture, he may have few resources left to deal with that impact in other, more adaptive ways.

Primary among important adaptive resources is the ability to take moderate emotional risks in situations where one's sense of self-esteem is involved. Lacking "emotional muscle," the individual tends either to withdraw as much as possible from exposure of his self-esteem, or at the other extreme he impulsively risks too much in an effort to get the anxiety and suspense over with.

The concept of moderate risk taking can be illustrated by examining the alternatives a person has when he is confronted with difficulty in relationships with a working colleague. Let us say, for example, that the other person has recently become noticeably unapproachable, cold, and unresponsive to attempts to communicate or influence on the part of our subject. The latter always has alternative actions which may be classified as low, moderate, or high risk, according to how emotionally impactful are the likely outcomes for his self-esteem. Low-risk alternatives would include withdrawing from the relationship oneself, resorting to written rather than oral communication, attempting to communicate through a third party, and so on. High-risk alternatives would include retaliating with some kind of personal attack on the colleague, reproaching him with his unfriendliness, complaining about him to a third party, or demanding to his face that he change his behavior.

On the one hand, we have a low-risk approach which allows the causes of the situation to remain unknown and undealt with for fear that any attempt to approach the problem directly will make matters worse or more emotionally uncomfortable. On the other, we have approaches which seem impulsively designed to "kill or cure," resolving the matter once and for all by some dramatic move. Because the dramatic move is based upon insufficient information about the other person's feelings and situation, however, it runs a very real risk of escalating the conflict beyond the possibility of dealing satisfactorily with it. It is this possibility of escalation of a difficulty through acting impulsively on very little information which characterizes the high-risk approach. Both high- and low-risk approaches seem more designed to get rid of the tension and uncertainty than to solve the problem.

In contrast, the moderate-risk approach is characterized by a willingness to increase tension somewhat in order to obtain information about the difficulty. In our example this might take the form of asking the other person whether anything were the matter; indicating that one was puzzled about the behavior of the other; trying to arrange increased interaction in non-work settings to see whether a relationship could be built on some more personal foundation; and so on. The important thing is not whether these attempts are successful in resolving the problem, but that they all give a little more information about it without running the risk of damaging the relationship much more. They also all involve some increase in tension for the subject, since they require that he make some overture toward the other which, if it is rebuffed, may result in some pain. This is why moderate-risk approaches require more emotional ability to stand tension over a period of time than do the others.

The needed ability to deal directly with a high degree of emotional impact is not likely to develop in the university classroom. The kinds of problems dealt with in the classroom neither require nor reward attempts to turn the learning situation into an opportunity for interpersonal encounter. In summary, then, the classroom is illy designed and poorly adapted to training persons to operate in settings where they must define and attack problems without the aid of authoritative or expert assistance and where the degree of emotional, attitudinal, and value involvement is so high as to require an ability to deal directly and continually with emotionally laden issues. There are, of course, many situations with these requirements in our own culture, e.g., in management and the helping professions. However, the demands for independence and ability to handle emotional involvement are sharply increased and focused in the overseas situation.

It is fashionable to inveigh against institutions of higher education for their failure to provide meaningful, relevant preparation for the greatest possible range of application situations. It is not the purpose of this paper to add another voice to the general outcry or to increase still further the volume of complaint and disappointed anger which are currently being hurled at institutions of higher education in this country. It is worth reflecting that, for the most part, our colleges and universities did not ask to become the single important processors of entrants into every adult occupation from motherhood

to biochemistry. University education was certainly never designed to prepare for such exotic adventures as the Peace Corps, marriage, or responsible citizenship in a mass society. It was designed to transmit the organized knowledge and accumulated wisdom of our culture to those who wished to make a livelihood of learning and scholarship. The design never included very much of an action component, and when it did, it was action in accordance with pretty well-defined principles and rules. University education was never designed to prepare for the kind of catch-as-catch-can, rough-and-tumble, learn-as-you-go orientation which is needed to be effective in an alien culture (or now, perhaps, in our own).

Toward an Alternative Model: Design Principles

In this section I shall put by criticism for construction and try to work toward design principles for cross-cultural training. These principles will differ from those of the university classroom on the two dimensions of freedom and encounter.

We shall want our training to (1) develop in the student more independence of external sources of decision, information, problem definition, and motivation; (2) develop the "emotional muscle" which will permit the person to deal constructively with the strong feelings which are created by conflict and confrontation of values and attitudes; (3) learn to make choices and commitments to action in situations of stress and uncertainty; (and 4) come to be able to use his own and others' feelings, attitudes, and values as information in defining and solving human problems. There are a number of design principles which follow directly from these aims and goals.

Problem solving. The individual should be continually exposed to situations which require him to diagnose what is going on, define a problem to solve, devise a solution, and take action upon it. Information, opinion, and theory which are not used in the problem-solving process will remain intellectually detached from experience and action and will not be readily available to the learner when he must solve problems under stress. The principle, posed in its extreme form, is that no information is presented which is not relevant to the solution of some real problem which the learner is asked to solve in the here-and-now.

Immediate data orientation. Immediate data are information which is gathered by observation and experience with the persons and the physical environment which are involved in some problem. It is distinguished from the facts, theories, opinions, and directions of experts and authorities. Learning to use immediate data, particularly from the social environment, frees the learner from dependence on authoritative sources of information. In training designs, problems are constructed so that their definition and solution require that the problem solver develop information from the persons who are present with him in the problem situation. Thus, skills of communication and relationship establishment are of paramount importance.

Value orientation. Since almost any action a person takes in a culture other than his own involves a confrontation between his values and those of the host country, along with all the stress and conflict which this implies, the problems which the learner is asked to deal with in training should also require a confrontation of opposing values. Furthermore, it is not enough that the learner examine these value conflicts with interest and detachment. In the cross-cultural application situation he will have to choose among conflicting values, and the consequences of his choices will be important. Therefore, our design principle is that in the training situation the learner should be confronted with problem-solving situations which require that he make choices among competing values which have consequences for his relationships with others in the training situation.

Experience-action orientation. A basic problem in cross-cultural training design may be stated inelegantly as "connecting head and guts." This means that training designs which lead only to understanding are never good enough. Training problems must require that the person experience the emotional impact of the phenomena with which he is dealing as well as understanding them. It also means that he must be able to translate ideas and values into direct action, with all the risks and difficulties which this entails. Inevitably this requires that the learner have to influence others to action as well as acting independently. Our principle, then, is that training situations will require that discussion and analysis lead to decision and action on the part of the trainee. This means, for example, that even the best led "discussion group" is only half a training situation, because it does not lead to action.

Use of authority. It is clear from the above that the authority of the educator or trainer is not to be used to diagnose situations, define problems, provide information, or select alternative courses of action for the learner. To the extent that these functions are performed for the learner, he is being taught how to learn through dependency on expert or authoritative help. On the other hand, it is clear that a sudden icy plunge into a world of anarchy and laissez-faire may be so confusing as to traumatize the learner to the point where he spends most of his energy in defending himself emotionally from the learning situation, and very little of his ability is available for growth and development. Further, in the absence of any controls, it is very easy for the learner to avoid and sidestep the confrontation with problems and the hard work on their definition and solution which is the heart of the learning process as we have prescribed it. A delicate and unusual use of authority is thus called for.

On the negative side, authority must not be used to deprive the learner of the opportunity to have his own experience. This means that, in general, he is not provided with information but is encouraged to seek it; he is not given solutions, but is asked to come to conclusions on his own; he is not told what action to take or how to take it, but action is expected of him.

On the positive side, authority is used to support the learner in his first steps in an unfamiliar learning environment. He is encouraged to experiment, to try and fail and try again, to take risks, to express himself and his values in words and action. He is rewarded by those in authority, not for succeeding or getting the right answer or expressing the right opinion, but for engaging actively and wholeheartedly in the learning process.

The negative, restrictive side of this use of authority is that the learner is to some extent "fenced in" to keep him in contact with the problems that he is expected to solve. Sanctions or punishments are applied, not for goofing up but for goofing off; not for making mistakes but for failing to act; not for taking an illogical or unreasonable position but for failure to take a stand.

Use of Expertise. In this training model, the use of expert resources is as different from the university classroom model as is the exercise of authority. In the first place, it is a basic premise that a person does not learn to exist effectively in another culture by being provided with information about that culture, its differences from and similarities to the learner's own. Although we can predict to some extent the kinds of problems and difficulties the learner will have to face in the cross-cultural situation, we cannot with any certainty at all predict the exact information which he will need to solve the specific difficulties he gets into.

We can, I think, predict the kinds of skills, orientations, and conceptual frameworks which the learner needs to be able to make sense of an alien and ambiguous social situation, to define and solve problems, and to take action in that situation. The need for expertise is less in providing information about the content of the other culture and more in teaching the problem-solving processes and the development of feeling-thinking linkages which are the primary goals of cur proposed training designs.

How, then, does the expert interact with the learner? He is, first of all, skillful at the design of situations which are so constructed that if the learner follows his own natural adaptive styles and patterns he will be confronted with the processes and problems which it is desired for him to learn about. These are "free movement" situations in that the learner's specific actions and activities are only loosely prescribed: he is free to solve the problem in almost any way he wants.

Second, the educator has some responsibility to help the learner to reflect about his experience. The process of linking thinking and feeling is as difficult when one begins with a concrete here-and-now problem and moves toward conceptualization of the experience as it is when one starts with ideas and facts and tries to move toward action based upon an intellectual analysis. This implies that the educator does not simply construct problems for the learner to solve and then sit back while the latter runs through a maze like a rat in a psychological experiment. At the very least, the educator should be there at the end of the maze to ask the learner what meaning the experience had for him, and what, if any,

connections and generalizations he can make between this particular experience and what he knows about himself, his goals in the cross-cultural situation, his own culture, and the alien culture.

In other words, it is just as possible for a person to have an experience-packed, emotionally laden, and conceptually meaningless learning experience as it is in the more traditional learning setting for him to have an intellectualized, detached, and emotionally bland one.

This can be illustrated by some observations I have made of some returned Peace Corps volunteers working as staff in Peace Corps training programs. It is not unusual for the returned volunteer to see in his overseas experience a kind of kaleidoscope of impactful, difficult, rewarding, and essentially unconnected experiences. They are unconnected in the sense that he does not see patterns, principles, or generalizations, except at the rather concrete level that in this particular culture there are specific things that one should do or avoid. The returned volunteer often does not have a clear conception of the processes which he used to adapt himself to the culture, to develop sources of information, to formulate and test hypotheses about problems he was involved in. When he communicates to trainees he often communicates at the level of "war stories." These anecdotes usually have as their central message, "It's no use to prepare for much of anything, because whatever you expect, it is going to come out differently from what you anticipated."

These veterans of the real world are sometimes bitterly disappointed with the abstract, detached intellectualizations which they received as training. At the same time, they seem not to have been able to turn their own experience into real learning or to make it available as training for others. They have been through an experience-based learning situation in their overseas assignment without learning anything which they see as clearly transferable to other social situations. They have not been able to conceptualize their experience. Hence, they cannot make it available to others.

I should hasten to add that I am sure there are other kinds of learning than verbal ones, and that even the most inarticulate of the returned volunteers may indeed have important behavioral skills which are available for transfer. Nor am I suggesting that the inability to generalize and verbalize is permanent. I have some evidence from watching these people over a period of time that, with assistance, they can come to conceptualize their experience much more adequately. The learning is not lost but is rather latent, waiting for some structuring conceptual framework into which the experiences may be fitted in a patterned way.

I emphasize the importance of conceptualization because it is possible to become so committed to the primacy of experience, emotion, and action as to devalue the organization of experiences in such a way that they are retrievable in another situation.

Essentially, the role which is being prescribed for the expert is one of aiding in the inductive learning process. He helps the learner to verbalize what his feelings, perceptions, and experiences have been and to draw conclusions and generalizations from them. This contrasts with the expert's role in more traditional learning settings, in which the learning process has a much more deductive emphasis. In our prescribed role, there is little room for the presentation by an expert of principles and generalizations from which the student is supposed to deduce consequences for application and action. He is expected to facilitate induction and deduction on the part of the learner rather than provide it for him.

Toward an Alternative Model: Training Settings

While it is impossible to specify the precise experiences which should go to make up a training program, it is possible to outline elements which would be present in a program designed according to the above principles. Some elements will be described below, with examples which would be appropriate in a program for Peace Corps community developers. The elements are general, although the examples may be somewhat specific in their application.

Orientation to training. A clear statement is given the trainees of the differences between their training and the traditional classroom settings to which they are accustomed. In particular, it is important to specify how the roles of the staff differ from that of a college professor in the classroom. The trainee is told how the staff will and will not use its authority; what information, direction, and help the staff members will and will not give; and against what criteria trainees will be evaluated. An overview of the training design is presented, and the reasons for the inclusion of specific activities are given.

The orientation begins to build a conceptual framework for the training. It also applies the authority of the staff in support of the design. The trainee learns that although things may be strange and different there are people here who know what they are doing.

Projects. A project is a situation in which an individual is required to take action, either by himself or with the cooperation of others. The ideal project requires that the learner(s) --

1. Obtain information from the social environment (communication).
2. Formulate and test hypotheses about forces and processes existing in the environment (diagnosis).
3. Select and describe some part of the situation which is to be altered or changed (problem definition).
4. Plan action to solve the problem (commitment, risk taking).
5. Carry out the action, enlisting the help and cooperation of others (influencing and organizing).
6. Verbalize attitudes, perceptions, and tentative learnings from the experience (cognition and generalization).

Projects are the heart of the training program. They may be as varied as the inventiveness of the training staff. They may be of short or long duration, and they can overlap or not with other training activities. A project may involve going out into the larger culture beyond the training situation, or it may be completely contained within the training setting. Examples will be given of projects which are completely contained within the program, since these are usually the most difficult and challenging to create.

One project requires the trainees to organize themselves into a community. They are informed that certain functions, such as cleanliness and order, recreation, rules, and discipline must be performed in any community, and that this is the chance for them to learn something about how a community operates by organizing and running one from the ground up. The staff gives no more directions as to specific procedures, but provides information when asked about available resources and facilities.

This project can be used to illustrate crucial differences in the elaboration of experience-based projects. At one extreme, the project is presented to the trainees; they solve it as best they can; and each person attains from it whatever learning naturally follows from his own involvement in the diagnosis of the problem, the development of plans, and the taking of action steps. No special effort is made to organize the comparing of experiences, the examination of value issues and conflicts, or the conceptualization of the influence styles and patterns which are used by different individuals in planning and executing action.

At the other extreme of elaboration, an effort is made to force learning from each part of the experience. Some individuals may be given special training and assistance in gathering, organizing, and feeding back observations to the participants. Data about the problem-solving process are collected by interview observation or by simple questionnaires. Small groups of trainees are convened at various points in the process to attempt to formulate clearly the problems of diagnosis, conflict, influence, and organization which they are facing. Staff members participate in work and planning sessions as process consultants whose role is to help participants to observe and become aware of the social forces with which they are dealing in the here-and-now.

The point of the elaboration is that it requires the trainee to take account of his training experience. Instead of floating on the surface of the experience, he is encouraged to dig into it, to formulate questions and hypotheses and generalizations about the things that are happening to him and others. Without some such elaboration, much of the experience may be lost to learning. The trainee may learn how to organize a group of trainees into a community, but he may not discover what this implies about diagnosing and influencing the social system of a community in an alien culture.

Unfortunately, it is the elaboration of an experience-based training design which requires the most planning and skill on the part of the training staff. It is relatively easy to provide trainees with experiences, problems to solve, and so on. The difficult part comes when one has to think through the learning and adaptation processes that must take place in this experience, devise means of collecting data about them, and aid trainees in conceptualizing the processes so that they may be applied in situations which are on the surface radically different.

Another project sequence is on the diagnosis of social systems and the induction of social change. Trainees learn skills of surveying and diagnosing communication systems, community power structures, and forces for and against change. They begin by examining the social system in which they live themselves. They select problems on which they will try to induce change.

Sample problems of a community development nature can be as homely as getting the dining hall to serve a wider variety of food; bringing other trainees to a higher level of sanitation and neatness in their living quarters; developing recreational activities; and influencing the training staff to provide needed resources for learning. In this project, any social problem in the training situation is a community development problem.

To aid trainees to learn from this project, they may be organized into small project groups, each with a staff member whose function is to help trainees to see and diagnose the problems, to work out their own approaches and to conceptualize and generalize what they learn about the functioning and change of social systems. Each group takes one or two community development problems which exist in the training situation. They diagnose the problem by interviewing, observing, and analyzing. They make decisions between alternate approaches to implement change; and they carry out the change attempt, revising their diagnosis and plans according to the results.

The importance of assistance to the trainee in conceptualizing and generalizing his experience must again be emphasized here. The essence of cross-cultural training is that it is impossible to reproduce or even to know precisely what conditions will be faced by

the trainee in the overseas situation. It, therefore, becomes necessary to use crude simulations. The processes of diagnosing and taking action on a problem are similar in the training and application situations, but the content of the problems is different. Unless the trainee has assistance in abstracting the process from the particular events, he will have a good deal of difficulty in translating what he has learned into usable form in the job for which he is being prepared.

The following are some important processes: finding out the values which people in a community hold toward some issue or problem with which the community development worker is attempting to help them; discovering who the opinion leaders and decision makers in a community are; diagnosing resistances which insiders put up against influence by an outsider; and learning what inducements, incentives, rewards, and punishments are available to a change agent in attempting to influence others to take action.

An assumption underlying these training designs is that the human and social problems and difficulties involved in understanding and changing a social system differ from one culture to another in their content: issues, symbols, and appearances. At the level of feelings, motives, perceptions, and attitudes, however, the process problems are quite similar. Thus, while it is desirable to conduct field training in a culture which is similar to that to which the trainee is going, it is by no means worthless to conduct it in a very different culture. The important thing about field training is that it should expose the trainee to an <u>alien</u> culture. That is, he should not be able to use his own values, attitudes, and assumptions about the way the world is organized to find his way into and become effective in the field training culture.

This opens up the possibilities for field training very widely indeed. If adequate help for conceptualizing and generalizing is available, almost any alien situation becomes an appropriate field training assignment for experiencing the difficulties of working cross-culturally. For the urban dweller, a rural situation may be alien; for people with middle-class backgrounds, the disadvantaged and the poor may provide real confrontation.

It could even be persuasively argued that field work in a mental institution should be in many respects ideal for the community development worker. The problem of finding the pattern and logic which are inherent in an alien culture is dramatically posed in such a situation.

A variant of the field work assignment is the intercultural work team. This involves that the trainee be assigned to work on some project in cooperation with members of an alien culture. In the process of working together to solve a problem, value differences, perceptual differences, and difficulties in communication will have to be faced and resolved. Again, such a project should have available to the participants some staff person, or persons, who would help the trainees become clearly aware of the processes in which they were engaged. They should not be permitted to simply have the experience, passing through the difficulties and disagreements without recognizing their significance.

The Stress Situation

A further example of training activities for the cross-cultural situation is the stress situation. Since the cross-cultural job is likely to involve a good deal of disappointment, failure, confusion, and disorientation, it is important for the trainee to learn something about how he deals with stress and to make a start toward the development of improved adaptive procedures. A stress situation can be anything which poses a problem which the trainee is not sure he can solve and where not solving it will be experienced by him as failure. What constitutes a stress situation varies considerably among individuals. Some are easily stressed by physical and athletic tasks such as the "Outward Bound" program of physical toughening used in some Peace Corps training programs. Others take these situations in stride, finding difficulty in social situations where they may have to take actions or initiatives which expose them to risk or rejection or conflict. Others may find social situations of all kinds easy to cope with, but they find being alone and without the ready presence and support of others a difficult and anxiety-producing experience.

In a cross-cultural training program each person should have an opportunity to discover what creates stress for him and how he deals with it. This means not only that it is important to provide a variety of challenging experiences but also that the stresses involved and the trainees' responses to them be the subject of reflection, discussion, and practice. The trainee should also be assisted in planning ways in which he can take advantage of the various project assignments to give himself additional practice in dealing adaptively with varieties of stress which are a problem for him.

The focus on stress should be planned to minimize the discomfort and lowered self-esteem which trainees experience when they find themselves more afraid or more timid or more upset than others by some experience. It should not be a question of whether or not one is made anxious or uncomfortable but rather by what kinds of experiences one is most stressed and distressed. This is easier said than done, as it requires a climate of greater than ordinary acceptance and trust between trainees and staff and among the trainees themselves.

The foregoing examples raise questions about the kinds of skills and knowledge which are required of educators in cross-cultural training programs. It is clear to begin with that the desired skill mix is sharply divergent from the blend of intellectual competence and verbal facility which makes a good classroom teacher or lecturer. The required skills are dictated largely by the kinds of situations in which the educator will find himself much of the time.

To begin with, he will not spend very much time in a classroom; he will spend a great deal of time in small groups and with individual trainees. When he is planning or preparing for training activities, he will spend relatively little time with books and other content material; he will spend most of his time planning with other staff members and planning with the trainees themselves.

In his interactions with trainees, the staff member will do little presenting and much listening. He will do little organizing of content material, but he must be skillful at seeing patterns, principles, and generalizations in the reactions of trainees to an experience in which they are participating. This would appear to imply that the job of the

educator in a program such as the one outlined above is more like that of a counselor or a therapist than that of a teacher. In the sense that our educator does very little telling, instructing, grading, and evaluating, this is true. However, skillful educators have helped students to learn from their ongoing experiences ever since Socrates. By and large, teaching by the inductive method has been a role for the few, rather than for the many. It is not only a difficult role, but it tends to be a relatively private and unrecognized one, rewarded mostly in the relationship between the educator and his students. Further, it requires a sensitivity to interpersonal process and an interest in the growth and development of the learner which is by no means universal among teachers in institutions of higher education.

Because of the process focus of these designs, research or subject-matter competence will not suffice as a replacement for skills in training, education, and the facilitation of the learner's growth. It is thus a very real question whether trained personnel can readily be found to operate such programs. It is hopeful that many young educators are dissatisfied with traditional methods. They often have interests and personal characteristics which can be developed into training competence. When we consider, however, that all of us are trained to operate comfortably within traditional systems of teaching and learning during the twenty years or so prior to being graduated from college, it is clear that many more "natural" classroom teachers will be found than "natural" educators for an experience-based system. Just as the university system is not most appropriate for the sort of cross-cultural training program we feel will be most transferable to the application situation, so also the personnel who are best suited to the traditional system may find it difficult to make the transition to the very different teaching-learning relationships which are at the heart of this proposal.

There are, fortunately, some relatively untapped sources of the competence which is needed. Some of these are in educational settings which are not highly valued by academicians. Industry, government, and the military have all had to develop methods of education which will "pay off" in immediately transferable and applicable skills. Unlike the university

educator, they can quickly see whether their trainees are better performing the jobs to which they are sent. If they are not, the trainer in an organization receives quick and often brutal feedback from his managerial colleagues. This knowledge of results has led to a much more rapid rate of change in pedagogy and educational technology in these applied settings than has been true in universities and colleges. There has developed, particularly among industrial trainers, an openness to innovation, experimentation, and change which is generally not found in institutions of higher learning. The people involved in these enterprises represent an untapped reservoir of potential competence for the cross-cultural training programs proposed above.

For a program like that of the Peace Corps, where returnees from the field are available for training their replacements, a ready source of potential educators exists. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that persons with practical experience are necessarily qualified by virtue of that experience to teach and communicate it. This is a particularly unjustified assumption when the proposed training is highly inductive. The "practical man" has most readily at his disposal a fund of experience, anecdotes, and "war stories" which purport to illustrate to the trainee how to handle various relatively concrete and specific situations in the particular foreign culture in which the trainer obtained his own experience. The value of the experienced person is not in these concrete and often undigested experiences but in his potential to conceptualize the cross-cultural learning experience in terms which can be applied to the design and conduct of experience-based learning. For example, if a community developer can come, as have some of the returned Peace Corps volunteers I have worked with, to see working with trainees as "another kind of community development," then they are well on their way to translating their cross-cultural experience into training design. They will have begun to understand the learning process in which they participated overseas, and they will be beginning to consider how such experiences might be simulated for trainees in process, if not in content.

This is not to imply that anyone who has had a cross-cultural experience can become an effective educator. Many cross-cultural experiences are so traumatic and many cross-cultural workers are so practical and concrete in their thinking that they learn only those situations and aspects of a culture which they directly encounter. They find it difficult to generalize beyond their own experiences to an understanding of the processes of communication, diagnosis, and influence which are common to cross-cultural change-agent assignments. They may have learned, but they have not learned how they learned. The learning may have taken place through trial and error and have succeeded by virtue of luck or dogged persistence, rather than by the building of a conceptual framework which was continually revised and modified as new data came in.

Among those who have taken part in cross-cultural experiences, however, there will be those who have learned how to learn and who can, with further training, begin to build experiences which will transmit these orientations and skills to others. To do this requires not only the personal skills alluded to above but a clear understanding of such principles of learning as those described in this paper. Such "theoretical" understanding is needed, because the conceptual framework for this sort of training is <u>not</u> implicit in our educational experiences as children, adolescents, and young adults. The more traditional conceptual framework of higher education is implicit in all of our educational experiences from elementary school onward. We are indoctrinated in this system, often without really understanding how it operates. We can operate within it by rote, whether as pupils or teachers; but this does not necessarily mean that we understand the conditions which facilitate learning and the transfer of learning to an application situation.

When, therefore, an individual is asked to participate in the design and conduct of training of a radically different form from traditional models, he can no longer use his rote understanding to determine roles for himself and for the learner. He needs a basic education himself in the teaching and learning process. He needs supervised and assisted experience in designing training, conducting it, and evaluating the results. He needs to work with others who are also struggling with the tasks of putting together and operating experience-based training designs.

I have tried realistically to indicate the difficulties in carrying out the proposed training, because it seems irresponsible to push for educational innovation without considering who is going to carry it out and what help they will need. The elementary and secondary school systems of the United States are full of the wreckage of excellent innovations which have failed through the lack of personnel with the training, motivation, and will to make them work. The plans proposed in this paper have no fail-safe ingredients to protect them from such failure. Just as being a community developer in a foreign country involves much more than a set of directions as to how to proceed, so also the launching of educational innovation requires more than a blueprint for success.

The advance of effective innovation in cross-cultural training will best be served by setting up training centers where the new methods can be intensively experimented with and which will serve as an eventual source of trained educators. It is by no means proposed that organizations which train huge numbers of personnel for overseas assignments, such as AID or the Peace Corps, attempt to convert their training programs in a wholesale manner. The cause of innovation is never served by confusion, ineptitude, or failure. Nor is it harmed by the continuation of traditional, harmless, but somewhat ineffectual programs. This paper proposes reform, not revolution, and to reform any educational system requires that the educators be re-educated to design and operate innovative systems. Such systems cannot be imposed upon personnel who have not the skills or the motivation to make them work without risking disaster.

Fortunately, there are some resources and forces toward innovation of the kind we have proposed. To begin with, our culture is highly pragmatic and application oriented. Americans are receptive to any ideas which demonstrably work. Supporting this pragmatism are the experiences of those who have lived in the cross-cultural situation, have been open to their experience, and have been able to generalize from it. That the majority of overseas Americans are not reflective in this way does not detract from the insights of those who are.

In addition, there is a small body of experience-based pedagogy available as crude models as to what this sort of training might look like. Some experiments in the Peace Corps point in this direction. In the area of human relations and interpersonal communication, practitioners of sensitivity training have been using experience-based pedagogy for some time. The same is true in entirely different content areas for much industrial and military training. The models are available, but they must be refined and adapted to the purposes at hand.

Last, the climate for educational innovation has never been more ripe than it is now. For the first time in recent years students in institutions of higher education are seriously beginning to question the goals and procedures of their education. There is a hunger for educational experiences which involve the whole person, which get to the "heart of the matter."

Cross-cultural education is higher education, but it is not ordinarily conducted by organizations which are formally, substantially, and irretrievably committed to the maintenance of the status quo. Hence, there is more hope for cross-cultural training to break out of the old patterns than there is for higher education generally. It is in the educational enterprises which seem ancillary and peripheral to higher education generally that the experiments will be conducted and the innovations tested which will determine the form of tomorrow's colleges and universities. It is in the hope of influencing and shaping the direction of this change that this paper has been written.

THOUGHTS FROM THE RAIN FOREST: ON ALLEY CATS, TAME TABBIES, AND PEACE CORPS TRAINING[1]

Richard L. Hopkins[2]

The decision to entice student "activists" to join the Peace Corps was a "high-risk-high-gain" kind of decision, even as it has since been modified. Nowadays, the Peace Corps seems to be saying, "When we go out on the porch and whistle we're hoping that a few alley cats will enter the door along with the tame tabbies who have been showing up."

Now alley cats can be difficult to handle: irreverent, often outspoken, hostile to the Establishment and sometimes just about everything else, at war with the world, they are more inclined to sit on the back fence and yowl than to curl up on the sofa and purr. But there is all that energy...

This could lead to a real change in the complexion of the Peace Corps which has become, since its precarious start, a kind of "square" way to rebel against the increasingly rationalized and bureaucratized world in which we live. Let's face it, the Peace Corps has become a manifestation of the Establishment, an <u>institutional</u> approach to meaningful action, to individual and direct involvement in the world... a long way from IBM, to be sure, but a long way, too, from SNCC. Those students who register voters and confront the sheriffs of the South, who parade for peace in Vietnam, who jeopardize respectability and sometimes even their physical safety in direct-action causes, have chosen a route to involvement which is, by and large, nonaffiliative. Or when there is affiliation, it often is with an organization such as SNCC or SDS that would warm the cockles of Proudhon's heart.

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[1]The thoughts expressed in this paper are those of the author and should not be interpreted as the official views of the Peace Corps.

[2]The author is former Director, Peace Corps Training Center, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and is presently Deputy Chief of Training, Office of Personnel Administration, Agency for International Development.

But the "nonaffiliated student activists" and Peace Corps Volunteers may have more in common than either group realizes. They share a common dissatisfaction with and alienation from the available options American life furnishes them. Unquestionably, one of the reasons many young people join the Peace Corps is to put off awhile and seek an alternative to a definitive decision regarding their postuniversity lives. Therefore it may make good sense to attempt to make the Peace Corps more attractive to young people who have previously sought a less structured, less bureaucratic way to reject American life as they see it and feel it. The big question is, How to do this?

I do not think the Peace Corps shall be very successful until it corrects not just its image but the fact behind the image. Some things cannot be changed, of course. The Peace Corps is a government agency, dependent on the Congress for support. It cannot be operated on the principles of the SDS or SNCC. But there are more effective ways than the Agency is now employing to harness, to direct, and give meaning to the immense energy stirring among recent college graduates, radical or square.

Peace Corps training, for example, has been about the squarest thing in the agency. For too long, it reeked of the very values that the most creative and involved student activists now roundly reject. Most of them would be appalled and feel betrayed by some Peace Corps training programs, perhaps even by most of them. Moreover, while the alley-cat types would reject them out of hand, these programs did not do a very good job of preparing even the more conventional trainees for service overseas.

Training is the potential PCV's first association with the Peace Corps as an institution. University training programs also offer the student shopper, looking for a way to give some meaning to his life, a glimpse at what the Peace Corps is really like.

Let us say that you are a student activist, an SDS member, concerned about the world, aching to get mixed up in something significant. You are shopping around among the options. Already you have rejected corporate life and its suburban trappings. Shall it be the Peace Corps or shall you go out and raise a little hell about Vietnam,

let us say? On your campus is a Peace Corps training program. You look it over, talk to some of the trainees... and run. The last thing you want, after all, is to spend another three or four months listening to the same old lectures, suffering the manipulations of the older generation. You want action that means something, and you see no signs that you will find it in the Peace Corps. So it's off to the streets.

Well, the true anarchist is probably better off on the streets than in the Peace Corps, but those who are merely unsettled and fed up could find more gratification -- and run fewer risks -- in the Peace Corps than in the often aimless irreverences of student radicalism.

There are real reasons to doubt the capabilities of many American universities to do an adequate or relevant job of training PCV's, square or not square. "The system of education which dominates today's universities," wrote Christopher Jencks in The New Republic, "...is largely irrelevant to the interest and needs of many undergraduates. The possibilities of internal reform are meager."

If this is so regarding the provision of undergraduate education, than how much less capable are the universities to train Peace Corps Volunteers. When one of the first objectives of training ought to be to convince the trainee that he is no longer a college student, he is placed in training programs where he can be nothing else!

The typical Peace Corps training program -- the standard model, conducted at a university, mostly in classrooms -- has been essentially a job-centered program. Here the purpose is to prepare the aspiring volunteer to do a "job", in the usual, American sense of the word. This kind of training program is likely to be chopped up into components, which conform by and large to university departmental lines, and time assigned to each component on an hourly-bloc basis -- so much to language, so much to technical studies, so much to area studies, and so on. But the emphasis rests on language and the specific technical skill called for in the basic program documents.

Such a program is likely to be conducted in an environment that differs little from the one the trainee has just escaped. Present are most of the trappings of the undergraduate life, with all or most of its en loco parentis rules and regulations, its classroom and blackboards, its textbooks and reading lists, its blue-book exams, its air-conditioned dorms and student-union atmosphere. A polar-cap training experience for life in the tropics if there ever was one.

In too many of these programs the environment is restrictive and authoritarian, a kind of exhausting endurance contest which the trainee survives by a curious kind of game playing designed to get him through the selection process as painlessly as possible. The upshot is that learning and change are minimal.

For those who doubt that this is the case, the following was extracted from the syllabus of a training program that began last fall at a Southwestern university:

> "It is felt that all trainees...should be sufficiently motivated and committed to Peace Corps service that there will not be time for any extracurricular activities that might cast reflection on the Peace Corps image. A 'beatnik' appearance should be avoided in dress, appearance, and action. Beards, shorts, and going without shoes is (sic!) prohibited at the Peace Corps training site. Even though casual dress is accepted in _____, trainees are expected to dress and conduct themselves with proper decorum at all times. Trainees must regard themselves as hosts (guests?) of _____ University and the state of _____ and are expected to adhere to the laws and regulations of these institutions, as will be expected of them when they are hosts (guests?) in _____. In short, everyone is expected to be a lady or gentleman at all times, in every sense of the word."

Dean-of-students regulations such as these may make trainees toe the line; they do not create an environment in which trainees can change much. Alley-cat types at this university are not likely to be attracted to this manifestation of the "image" -- a cross between a military academy and a finishing school.

(One further note: The trainees in this program live in a first-class, air-conditioned motel near the university campus and will do much of their work at the university's model experimental farm.)

The second approach, which is not nearly so widespread, will be called here role-centered training. Its purpose is to prepare the volunteer not just to do a job but to live a life, to undertake a kind of total role as a change agent, whatever his technical specialty, his prior professional or technical training. It is a program in which the technical skill, if any, is perceived as a kind of peg to hang a way of life on. The process of the training program is considered to be as important as subject matter. It is likely to be what the training technicians call an "experienced-based" program, less structured, conducted in freedom, with the essential order resting not on the exercise of adult authority but on an assumption of responsibility by the trainees for parts of their own training and development.

One of its great advantages can be that it draws people out rather than shutting them up. A trainer in a program like this might be appalled by beards and a beatnik appearance, but the last thing he would do is print a list of regulations forbidding them. Beards come off and shoes go on when trainees discover that no one in authority is particularly impressed by the presence or absence of either.

The traditional approach has several real advantages which have led to its hanging on as long as it has. Given the way things are, they may even be critical advantages. First, this kind of training is less risky, less likely to get an administrator or trainer into trouble. It can be more easily administered, both by overworked Peace Corps staff operating vis-a-vis the training institution and by the program director himself.

This kind of training falls within the university's frame of reference. It represents what the university is used to doing. It does not require the university to change much, does not imply curricular changes of any great significance or sharply different attitudes toward the purposes of education or methods of teaching. Such a program, for example, can be mounted without the ugly necessity of suggesting to a

full professor that he should do things differently from the way he has been doing them. It may be the only kind of training that can be conducted at some universities.

Such training can even make a certain kind of trainee more comfortable. It gives him the feeling of having been "trained" without having been changed. He has, after all, listened to countless lectures, learned to speak a language, learned some native dances, read books, studied maps, perhaps even talked to and been oriented by Peace Corps staff members and former Volunteers. He has worked hard, taken a lot, suffered exhaustion, boredom, and congratulations for his altruism, played by the rules, and been selected in. And all this has taken place in the environment, after all, where one goes to learn -- a college campus.

So he goes overseas, endures tremendous shock at how different things are, and takes six months to train himself (or gets sick of the whole thing and comes home).

The trouble is that he has not really been trained at all, at least not for life in the Peace Corps. The success of such a program is illusory, except for language training which apparently can be successfully accomplished in a vacuum, however defective the trainee's larger communication skills may be. The kind of change that might make a difference simply never has a chance to occur. Little has been done to give meaning to the activist energy the trainee may possess.

If change has occurred, it may have occurred because something has gone wrong in the administration of the program. Ironically, some of the more incompetently administered Peace Corps training programs have produced the best-trained Volunteers, precisely because they forced the trainees to cope with ambiguity, to wrestle with an emotionally charged environment, to assume responsibllity for portions of their own training, and to deal with the grand issue of what they were training for anyway. These are experiences more closely related to the true demands of Peace Corps service than the endless lectures and the high degree of inappropriate structure that would have been present had such programs come off well.

Role-centered training, on the other hand, is directed toward the preparation of a whole Volunteer, not just a middle-level technician beveled down to fill a slot defined in a program document. Training conducted in relative freedom, if it is done well and by administrators willing to take risks and grab a bear by the tail, offers a number of vital advantages.

For one thing, it conforms more nearly to the purposes of the Peace Corps. Its aim is to initiate processes in attitude and learning which will be just as valuable in the Volunteer's post-Peace Corps life as in his life overseas. It seeks to stimulate self-examination, awareness of process, sensitivity to environment. Its purpose is to "educate for life" (oh, hallowed, harried term!). Its major concern is with teaching trainees how to learn, how to perceive, and how to understand and evaluate their environment and their place in it.

There is plenty of room in such a program for skills training -- realistic skills training, directed as much toward helping the trainee to know what he already knows as toward teaching him manual or technical skills he does not possess, probably for good reason.

Training design problems in such a program are intricate and difficult. They have to do with devising concrete training experiences which force the trainee to deal with ambiguity and lack of familiar structure and to understand group process. Thus the emphasis must be not only on cognitive material and formulas but also on feelings and behavior and the problems of communication and the stimulation of change. On, in short, the creation of a transitional environment which forces the trainee to grapple with the real issues of the Volunteer's life overseas.

All the things that make traditional training easier make this kind of training more difficult. Such a program may produce anxiety, anger, hostility, or at the very least, restlessness and discontent, among the trainees themselves. It may keep them off balance. In fact, it should. It may not provide easy answers that can be put to memory. The environment of such a program is deliberately ambiguous and thus is hard

on trainees and staff alike. It forces a new approach to learning on the part of trainee and teacher. It is a "reactive" program in which unexpected problems must be dealt with as they occur. Above all, it is neither explicitly nor implicitly authoritarian. Role-centered, experienced-based training is no place for the rigid trainee or the rigid teacher.

And finally, since its concern is with amending behavior and attitudes it cannot be a closed-end program which can be wrapped up in a neat little package for, let us say, a final report. Not the least of its liabilities from the bureaucrat's standpoint is that it cannot very easily be described in a syllabus; it cannot be outlined. It is hard to contract for. Uncomfortable and ambiguous as such a program may be, it releases creative energy instead of suppressing it. It harnesses energy to be expended toward goals that enhance the trainee's image of himself, his need to feel (even as he resists it) that he is getting mixed up in something real, something vital, something counterbureaucratic, something that will enable him to "suffer" in manageable and fruitful ways.

If the gravest problems of Volunteers are, as David Reisman suggested in his statement on the Peace Corps as an educative experience, "emotional and interpersonal," then what kind of sense does it make to continue to design and implement programs whose very structure and design have the effect of shielding trainees from confrontation with these issues? It makes none at all.

I think most of those who are responsible for Peace Corps training know this and have known it for a long time. They have resorted to irrelevant and expensive university programs, have <u>settled</u> for them, because of pressure to do so, because of anxiety and uncertainty as to what else to do, inability to cope with the ambiguity Volunteers are expected to cope with.

It may be, as Reisman also suggests, that no one quite knows how to design training that meets the emotional and interpersonal needs of Volunteers -- that gives them a

start on learning how to learn. I would say that we know more about designing such a program than we do about implementing it, given the kind of milieu we work in. And yet such training is going on, in a kind of inchoate form, in the Peace Corps Training Center and elsewhere.

At the Puerto Rico Training Center, we attempted, with modest but I think discernible success, training programs in which the so-called dichotomy between experimental and intellectual education was bridged, however slightly and tentatively. We did some radical things, perhaps because we were really not capable of doing things any other way, given our limitations. These limitations included isolation, the youth and inexperience of our staff, and our lack of books and materials. But the point is that what we did seemed to have impact, seemed to work.

For example, at the Training Center we ran the first program in Peace Corps history designed and implemented entirely by former Volunteers. Previous programs were designed by the administrative staff and given to the staff to implement -- a different thing altogether. The planning took place over a six-week period, during which about ten ex-Volunteer staff members met once or twice daily, seven days a week, with invaluable help from a consultant of professional status, and clawed and scrambled out a training program which they then ran. It was not so very different in structure, really, from previous programs at the Center -- but it worked much more effectively because it belonged to the staff, was not imposed on them, and because in the six-week planning period they made a good start on learning how to work together and how to make decisions. In this respect, the program differed profoundly from any other Peace Corps training program anywhere.

Putting this program together and dealing with it day by day was a fantastic learning experience for the staff (average age about 25), and an equally exciting experience for the administration.

One of the things we learned is that successful training can be conducted in an environment of relative freedom. This program was organized on a kind of smorgasbord basis. The staff offered a certain number of learning opportunities each week, including language, which were adjudged to be more or less essential to everyone. The rest of the time trainees were free to pursue their own projects, to pick and choose among specialized options, and to call on staff members to present supplementary or specialized materials.

Each week a couple of hours were set aside for frank, small-group evaluations of what was going on. The emphasis here was on careful observation by the trainee of what was happening in the program -- to him, to his fellow trainees, and to the staff-- and on evaluation of what this had to do with his development as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Not everything worked, of course, and certainly not all of the trainees were happy and contented. Some even wondered when the real training program would begin. But it was an environment in which a free and independent soul need not feel crushed and put down, where he could work on sharpening up interests he already had so that they could be more useful to him overseas, where he need not feel that his individualism was being ground away so that he would fit into a slot somewhere. A number of trainees have remarked that they simply could not believe their training program was real, that it differed so from the kind they had been led to expect.

The upshot for the trainees was a new kind of learning experience for most of them, a true extension of their ability to learn, a stirring and unsettling experience in mastery. One of them said in a small-group discussion: "When I came to training, I rode on an airplane for the first time. I took my first train ride. I was in a taxi by myself for the first time. And here at camp I'm doing a lot of other things for the first time. Just doing them is teaching me a lot about myself. I think this will help me be a better Volunteer in Ecuador." This is the kind of intellectual-experiential connection she might never have been encouraged to make elsewhere.

What I have described here has a bearing on the development of the Peace Corps as an educational institution. I am convinced that we have something to teach about training (as well as a lot to learn). Our consultant from the National Training Laboratories said it for me one day: "What a great place," he remarked, "to train college professors."

Because of what we have learned from such experience-based programs, I believe we should turn for training only to universities willing, in a spirit of change, for their own sakes as well as the sake of the Peace Corps, to adopt a new approach (for them) to training and education or at least to make possible its development as an adjunct to the institution's regular program.

When we run out of universities willing to try something new, then we should intensify our efforts to involve para-educational institutions in Peace Corps training. Let the universities continue to pursue their intellectual ends. These are invaluable, but they have relatively little to do with the preparation of Peace Corps Volunteers.

The Peace Corps' mission, after all, is not to change higher education but to recruit, select, train, and support volunteers overseas. If the provision of the best and most relevant training available must await the reform of higher education, there may be a long wait for significantly improved training. We should do what we can to improve training as quickly as possible, and not make it dependent on a new relationship with higher education, however desirable and exciting and promising a prospect that may be in the long run.

We should be working toward the creation of an environment in all our training programs which will not scare out the alley cats, which will reward creativity and irreverence. We should point toward training programs which are not something to be endured but part of a continuing process which will still be alive when the Volunteer reenters the mainstream of American life.

"A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING"[1,2]

Richard L. Hopkins[3]

Introduction

The Peace Corps Training Center consists of two camps -- Camps Crozier and Radley -- located in a semi-rain forest area of central Puerto Rico, about 15 and 18 miles respectively from the coastal city of Arecibo. Each camp has a capacity of about 110 trainees. Trainees live in simple wooden cabins (or casetas). There is no indoor plumbing or hot water for trainees. Nature is kind (despite 140 inches of rain a year), but life is primitive.

Camp Crozier was established in the early fall of 1961; Camp Radley, about 10 months later. They were utilized until the fall of 1964 as so-called Outward Bound camps, where trainees were received before or after university training for three or four weeks of rigorous, graduated physical activities especially designed to confront the trainees with challenges which stretched their capacity to deal with stress and overcome fear.

In September, 1964, after a small pilot project, the camps were converted into a full-scale training center for Latin America. Since that time, only full-length (10-12 week) training programs have been conducted here.

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[1]A Report on the Fall-Winter Training Programs, 1965, at the Peace Corps Training Center, Arecibo, Puerto Rico: the Ecuador RCA/Colonization Project, and the Latin American Regional Arts and Crafts Project.

[2]The thoughts expressed in this paper are those of the author and should not be interpreted as the official views of the Peace Corps.

[3]The author is former Director, Peace Corps Training Center, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and is presently Deputy Chief of Training, Office of Personnel Administration, Agency for International Development.

The staff of the Training Center now consists of a director, five assistant directors, four Ph.D.-level psychologists who are responsible for trainee assessment, an administrative officer, an associate administrative officer, and 30 maintenance workers and cooks, two nurses, about 15 native-speaking language informants, and approximately 30 former PCV's from Latin America (average age 25) who comprise the hard-core instructional and coordinating staff. The resident staff is supplemented in each cycle by 12 to 20 academicians and technicians who come to the Training Center for stays of three to ten days each.

The training that is discussed in this paper took place at Camp Crozier. Two projects were involved:

The Ecuador RCA/Colonization Project included 40 trainees -- two recently graduated engineers, eight nurses, and 30 so-called B.A. Generalists. They were to work in newly colonized areas of the Oriente region of Ecuador as elementary teachers or technicians and, what is most important, as community development workers.

The Latin American Regional Arts and Crafts Project included 42 trainees, all artisans (weavers, potters, metalworkers, painters, and so on), several of them graduates of art schools or technical institutes such as the Pratt Institute or the Rhode Island School of Design. They were to be divided among three countries -- Ecuador, Chile, and Bolivia, where they would work with native artisans in developing exportable handicraft items (rugs, ceramics, panama hats, among others) through the organization and administration of producer cooperatives.

Like all Peace Corps trainees, these were subject to the Peace Corps' selection process. Eighty-two trainees reported for training, and 57 were sent overseas. In other words, 25 trainees either resigned or were -- as the Peace Corps euphemism goes -- "selected out."

The Program

A training program such as the one just concluded here should be viewed as a process, not an event. I will attempt in this paper to explain the process of this program as well as to describe some of its peaks and valleys, its tensions and anxieties, its successes and failures and to comment on the ways in which our experience with this experiment might be utilized by other Peace Corps trainers in other places working under different conditions.

The program can be broken down for purposes of descriptive analysis into five distinctive periods.

Phase I: Planning -- Weeks Minus-Four to Zero

Nothing that occurred subsequently could have happened without the intensive five-week planning period that preceded the opening of the program. In fact, in some ways the most distinctive characteristic of the program was that it was planned and implemented by an informal, shifting committee of the instructional staff who made decisions on their own, dealt with the issues of the program without interference by or direct, formal direction from the director of the Training Center. This made for occasional administrative confusion and conflict and it left issues unresolved. But it worked.

In the beginning, the entire training center staff and ultimately, about a third of it (the remainder for various reasons dropped off the informal committee) planned the program by meeting and talking about what training was all about, what was wrong with the training they had known before, and the other issues of training Peace Corps Volunteers. Meetings on one or another aspect of training occurred several hours a day, seven days a week, for over a month.

In this stage of the process, Roger Harrison (of Yale University and the National Training Laboratories) played a pivotal but nondirective role. Harrison, who came to Puerto Rico for three weekends during the early stages of planning, functioned mainly as a poser of issues, a gadfly, and a critic. At points of crisis, he helped the staff work through their conflicts. It was his influence that helped the staff to have confidence in the Training Center director's offer of autonomy. By the time the program began, the staff knew that it was their program. Uncertain and queasy as some of them were, they were ready to take risks. This readiness, when all was said and done, was the heart of the matter.

These, then, were to be the basic aspects of the program as it was planned:

1. From the day of their arrival here, the trainees would be encouraged to participate actively in the planning of their program. In fact, in a sense, there would not be a program unless they planned it. The instrument through which this was to be achieved was a packet of materials which included descriptions of the projects for which the trainees were preparing: a variety of case studies, letters from Volunteers, anecdotes, in-country regulations; and miscellaneous materials bearing on the life of a Volunteer in Latin America. These materials were to be read and, hopefully, digested by the trainees, after which the materials would constitute the basis for up to five hours of small-group discussions on the general and specific roles of Volunteers, the trainees' own expectations, and what kind of training program they needed in order to reach the objectives they had formulated.

2. Formal classroom lectures would be played down. Small-group interaction, formal and informal, would be played up, as would informal interaction of all kinds.

3. Except for Spanish (four hours a day) and weekly evaluation sessions, attendance at the "happenings" of the program would not be compulsory.

4. An effort would be made to do away with component labels and thus to "integrate" the elements of the program.

5. The program would be "experience-based" insofar as this was practicable. There would be ample opportunities furnished for "doing things," such as organizing and operating cooperatives, raising chickens and pigs, planting and tending gardens, approaching "academic" subjects through research projects, and the like. Trainees with a needed skill would be urged to teach it to others, formally or informally. The emphasis, in short, was to be on trainee activity, not passivity.

6. Emphasis would be placed throughout on awareness to the environment of the training program, to what was going on and how the trainees were reacting to it and to one another. This was to be achieved through weekly small-group, two-hour "evaluation sessions." The personnel of these core groups, including the leaders, would remain more or less constant throughout the program.

It would be inaccurate and misleading to suggest that there was consensus even among the planning staff on all these items. Only about one-third of the staff were regularly engaged in the planning process. The remainder had opted out for a variety of reasons and were, at best, interested but passive, at worst, hostile and threatened bystanders. Not the least of the perfectly valid reasons for opting out was that at the other camp in the Training Center there were two programs in progress and 120 trainees who needed training, too.

This lack of consensus and/or involvement was later to cause some difficulty because a number of instructors who had opted out were needed to play instructional roles in the experimental programs.

The trainees arrived in two waves, a week apart, 32 strong. Things began to hum.

Phase II: Weeks Two to Four

From the beginning the trainees picked up the basic signal that they were involved in something different. They did not know exactly what it was, but they liked it. The initial discussions were almost too good to be believed. The camp buzzed with talk for over two days. There were a few reports of problems. Conflict became evident among discussion leaders as it became apparent that their agendas differed. A few trainees made it clear that they were ready for the training program to start any time we were. One group even sought to depose its leader, because of his nondirective approach. A couple of pre-Peace Corps T-Group veterans sought to manipulate the leader of their group into conducting more of the same for their less fortunate fellows. There was a fascinating and promising variety of responses.

Things, in short, went about as we had hoped, except that the trainees obstinately failed to "call for" or "design" their own training program. They sat back and waited. Finally, it was decided to send the trainees, in pairs, to Puerto Rican pueblos to get a taste and smell of Latin life. This was done partly, too, to rid the camp of Group One while Group Two arrived and got oriented.

Even after they returned, in a sober and thoughtful mood, almost all the trainees sat back and waited for something to happen. Finally something did. It was one of those fortunate fortuities that kept cropping up throughout the program and made life so interesting for all of us. The occasion was a staff-led discussion of agriculture training conducted by two staff members who had not been much involved in the program planning. After an hour or so of discursive talk, the trainees concluded that one of the farm projects they wanted to undertake was to husband some baby chicks to maturity.

"Sure thing!" replied one staff member. "The baby chicks we ordered last week arrive later today. You've got two hours to get ready for them."

The trainees' reaction was spontaneous and predictable. They had been had. The job at that point was to rebuild and define some issues. The process was tortuous, but the job got done -- just barely in time.

Phase III: Reconstruction and Revolution -- Weeks Four to Six

This was the period of greatest staff and trainee frustration. Some trainees reacted to the "chicken thing," as it ultimately came to be known in the lore of the program, almost with glee. Here was prcof positive that the staff had no intention of leaving much of the planning to them. Some of them found it difficult to believe that the "chicken thing" had been a kind of aberration or that it revealed a fissure in the staff ranks, even when we suggested this.

In dealing with "crises" such as this the weekly evaluations were very useful. Within a couple of days after the "chicken thing" it was being discussed by all the trainees in a setting that encouraged reflection as to what it all meant as well as consideration of how to deal with a staff that was clearly getting closer every day to being fallible.

The most accurate word with which to describe this period is fitful. No one knew quite what to do. There were herky-jerky efforts on the part of isolated trainee groups to deal with the ambiguity in which they had been placed. A number of the staff were attempting to seduce the trainees to one or another component. A handful of staff members were becoming visibly discomfited; a couple retreated almost completely, wondering what they should do. A few index fingers trailed nervously toward the panic button. Some instructors were reduced, in their own eyes, to placing notices on the bulletin board offering instruction to interested trainees.

But the yeast was working. A handful of the trainees were awed by the freedom they were experiencing. The idea that an adult could level with them had simply never occurred to them!

There were, of course, retreats into "work" by some trainees and a few manifestations of anger, especially on the part of some of the artisano trainees when they were unable to get their cooperatives operating effectively. An interesting development was the spontaneous organization by ten trainees of a so-called "group dynamics" group, which eventually spawned a second like group.

Other "critical events":

> On returning from a two-week recruiting trip to the States, during which he had, of course, been pretty much disengaged from this program, one staff member unthinkingly announced to the trainees the imminent beginning of a series of political and cultural discussions on topics selected by, at times designated by, and in groups arranged by him. A vocal minority of the trainees rose up and howled at this unwarranted violation of their autonomy. They already had their <u>own</u> political and cultural studies groups going, on subjects <u>they</u> had chosen, and "they'd be damned if they would change!"
>
> The instructor was mortified. Only with great difficulty was he convinced that he should go back to this group and seek an accommodation. He did, though, and quite successfully for all concerned. And everyone learned from this hapless "error" a little bit more about the dynamic situation we were all involved in.
>
> A minor revolt occurred over the issue of the peer ratings which are used for assessment purposes. Trainees typically do not like the idea of peer ratings. This group differed, however, in that it expressed its anger openly. Well ahead of the time scheduled for administration of the ratings, the trainees appointed a committee to call on the Assessment Officer to protest. They were sensitively if somewhat suspiciously received, and the upshot of it all was that the Assessment Officer later met with the entire trainee group and talked through the matter -- to everyone's satisfaction, apparently.

This was the period, too, during which the first outside experts (most of them from <u>academe</u>) began to arrive at the Training Center. A basic pattern for their utilization developed which conformed perfectly to the program format, which pleased every last one of the visitors and which we commend to other institutions concerned with the problem of fitting casual lecturers into the rhythm of a program.

The system was essentially this: Each lecturer was given one shot at the whole group in one formal session which, of course the trainees were free to attend or not, as they saw fit. As it happened, most did. After this, everyone was on his own -- the trainees to arrange further utilization of the "expert," the expert to push himself or not, as he saw fit.

And finally, during this period the trainees began to make tentative efforts to get things organized, as it began to dawn on them that maybe we were serious about our offer of autonomy after all. Their first step was to send representatives to ask for a more formal schedule to be worked out jointly with the staff. These representatives were selected by lot, which revealed to us the paltry degree of organization that had been achieved up to this point. The real world was beginning to loom ahead, in which demands would be made on them for specific skills and information which the program had not formally provided to many of them.

At this time I began to feel an acute need to know what was going on in the program. So I called two meetings, half of the group in each one, for the purpose of finding out.

These meetings were a kind of watershed. As the trainees loosened up, what they said revealed that they were in the midst of an experience that for some of them was staggering. First, they reported that the trying-out period was over. They believed in their freedom to choose and to take charge of their own training program and to exploit the staff as resources. Then, one after another they revealed, first, their profound disillusionment with previous educational experiences and, second, the sense in which they felt they were changing and looking at their environment differently because of what they were going through.

Much of what they said was abstract and vague as they struggled to articulate feelings, but it all was affecting and gratifying. The feeling among the staff was that it made all the effort worthwhile.

Phase IV: Weeks Seven to Ten

Then began a period of feverish activity. Before anyone quite realized it, the trainees were scheduling themselves 12- to 15-hour training days, packed with activities of all kinds. During some hours of the day there were as many as three or four competing activities, all arranged by, requested by, or, in some cases, even taught by the trainees. It was an exciting thing to watch a trainee from one project, a business administration graduate, patiently teaching simple accounting to the weavers, potters, and designers in the other project. Or to learn that a few trainees had made special arrangements

with instructors for extra Spanish instruction, with some ending up with seven or eight hours a day!

Along about this point, several staff members who had been most deeply distressed by the lack of familiar structure became acutely anxious. Their anxiety was understandable. It grew from the failure of a substantial number of trainees to feel a need for the components for which these instructors were ordinarily responsible. A couple of staff never did succeed in selling the trainees on their subject matter. But one instructor who had been among the more severely disaffected earlier did ultimately succeed in lobbying considerable participation in his component. He simply hung in there during the fight for time until a dozen or so trainees became interested in his subject.

The intermediate selection board was an especially jarring experience to this group of trainees. The outcome of this board became the one unsettling event that we found impossible to turn to our advantage as trainers. Our efforts to involve either the assessment staff or the two Selection Officers assigned to this project in the ambiente of what we were attempting to do were not successful. A number of selection decisions were made at the intermediate board that simply made no sense at all to the trainees or to a large part of the staff. Trainees were dropped at midboard who seemed to us to be in the midst of promising transformations of self-insight and interpersonal behaviour. Whether these processes would have been sufficient by the end of the program to justify taking a risk on the trainees involved, no one knew. It was sharply disturbing to some staff members to see the process cut off so abruptly midway in the training program when not even their detractors claimed that these trainees would have damaged either themselves or the program by sticking with it until the end.

It had early become apparent that one of the most prickly obstacles to the kind of staff-trainee dialogue we all sought was the fear of selection. Confronted with selection decisions that seemed arbitrary and insensitive, a number of trainees felt betrayed and, in feeling betrayed, withdrew from the staff and administration a considerable measure

of the trust they had given us. But even this squall-line passed eventually and the program moved into its final weeks in a hum of useful and fruitful activity.

Not all of the activity was task-and-skill-oriented. In the final two weeks of the camp phase of the program, an intense concern developed among a third or more of the trainees as to "what all this meant" and, in any case, "how do you measure it?" These trainees were even successful in organizing most of their colleagues into special groups to discuss these issues. No conclusions were reached, but it seemed remarkable enough that they had tried.

Phase V: Wrap-Up -- Weeks Ten to Fifteen (including Field Training)

The tension went out of the training program in its final 10 days or so.

Only one incident betrayed the anxiety that lay beneath the calm surface of things. It had to do with the four-day trek, the climax of the residual Outward Bound program held over from the ancien regime before the Training Center was converted to full-scale training.

The program as it once existed has been modified and reduced to a scale in keeping with the overall training objectives. But the three basic components -- rock climbing, drown proofing, and trekking -- remain, in leaner and more economical form than in the Romantic era.

In this program, rock climbing came first and most trainees chose to participate in it.

Drown proofing followed and here participation was spotty, partly because this activity happened to fall in Period Four described above, partly because the frequent rains of that period dampened spirits and made the training tank less popular, let us say, than the library.

By the time the trekking program was thrown up for grabs, most trainees chose not to grab. At least they failed to grasp its significance. (The Four-day Trek is the culmination of a series of graduated treks in which the trainees, in small groups, are

driven 25 to 30 miles from camp, armed with map and compass, with instructions to find their way home through the rugged Puerto Rican back country.) The staff, which by this time was meeting regularly again after a brief hiatus in Phase IV, got hung up on the issue of whether to use a little gentle compulsion in this case. This issue was never resolved nor were several others tangential to it, such as whether trainees who had not participated in one or all of the preliminary treks should be allowed to participate in the final one.

Considerable individual pressure was brought to bear on trainees by those staff members whose devotion to Outward Bound was especially firm.

Eventually the trainees, not the staff, called a meeting on the subject in which several staff members were asked to sit as a panel to discuss the issues. In this meeting a lot of feelings got into the open as both staff-to-staff and staff-to-trainee conflicts were unbuttoned. Some of the staff members who had been least involved in and committed to the program _in toto_ were the principal operatives in the trekking program, and much of their latent frustration spilled out as they made their pitch for the efficacy of trekking as a relevant learning experience.

(My own feelings, which I expressed as an invited panel member, were that as trainees are provided with other experiences that seem to them real and engaging, the relative impact of the gut-level Outward Bound experiences diminishes, but that hundreds of trainees had found the trek to be a rewarding experience and that this group might, too. I did make it clear that the choice should be theirs and that they should not feel that they had failed if they did not react to the experience in a prescribed way.)

The upshot of it all was that about two-thirds of the trainees went on the trek and that most of them enjoyed it or profited from it, according to their own reports.

But despite this small bit of _sturm und drang_, the final two weeks of the camp program were calm and reflective, full of hard work and hard thought. It was a period during which we urged the trainees to prepare themselves for the three-week field training experience that faced them. Some trainees were quite obviously in the midst

of a kind of "crisis of commitment" at this stage, and we did our best to encourage them to come to grips with their feelings about how they really wanted to spend the next two years of their lives.

The atmosphere was made even more productive by the return of Roger Harrison. He had not participated in the program planning or the subsequent activities since the early weeks. His presence now was especially useful as he assisted the staff in identifying the major issues of the program. In perhaps his most valuable contribution of all, he assisted in the reintegration of those staff members who had come over to Crozier at the end of the Radley program and who were feeling a little out of things.

And so the program ended, and the trainees were packed off for a three-week field experience.

Some Reflections

If this was, as some of us felt, a special kind of training program, what were the elements that made it special?

It seems to me that there were at least four:

1. The first was the attitude toward and the use of their own authority by the staff. This was a program in which a real effort was made -- and a largely successful one, I think -- not to use authority arbitrarily and especially not to use it in defining the goals of the training program for the trainees or in playing any kind of real or assumed *in loco parentis* role. The trainees were treated like responsible people capable of making their own decisions about the vital issues of training.

   Throughout the training program, to a remarkable degree, we leveled with the trainees, kept them informed, told them how we felt about things, expressed our own misgivings about what they and we were doing.

   As a result they tended largely to trust us. This was easier, admittedly, than it might be in other training situations because of the relative youth of the staff. But I still consider the restraint exercised by the young staff in the open utilization of their authority to have been a notable achievement, especially since the program was such that it excited a great deal of anxiety in everyone.

   Conversely, the most difficult issue with which we had to deal throughout the program revolved around how and when to use authority effectively. I cannot say that this issue was ever resolved or that it could or should have been.

2. The second significant element, it seems to me, was the degree and intensity of planning that went into this program. The kind of training described here cannot be conducted by an unprepared staff or by a staff that has not confronted, grappled with, and in some measure dealt with beforehand most of the issues such training raises. This is true because so many of the critical issues of the program demand a reactive capacity that can be built only through intensive preparation. It is not consistency, in the usual sense of the word, that is a virtue in such a program, but the honesty and candor that grow out of self-confidence and awareness to what is going on. Achieving this state of grace requires a lot of anguished working-through-of-issues, as the Training Center staff can attest.

3. The third distinctive characteristic of this program was the emphasis placed on what I will call awareness to the total environment -- that is, the emotional, interpersonal, organizational environment in which we all were working and living.

For example, the first group to arrive at the Training Center was urged to consider how it really felt about the arrival of the second group a week later, and vice versa. When crises occurred, those affected by them were urged to analyze what had really happened and why the principals in the crises had acted as they did.

Throughout, the trainees were urged to consider the Camp as a community -- to be understood, researched, charted and, if necessary, changed. This a part of them really tried to do. If something extraordinary did happen in this program, it may have grown out of this characteristic more than any other.

4. The fourth distinctive element was the emphasis placed on relevance. This program was not viewed by the staff as an extension of the trainees' liberal arts education. Its purpose was to prepare Peace Corps Volunteers to live and work overseas, which can be a different thing altogether.

It has been suggested in some quarters that this kind of program is fine as far as it goes, but that it really is not appropriate to most Peace Corps training situations or to regions of the world other than Latin America.

I cannot agree with these conclusions. Several of the characteristics of the programs conducted at Camp Crozier last fall and winter are transferable to Peace Corps training in general.

1. The informal utilization of "experts" described above is certainly transferable. All that is required is careful choice of lecturers, an honest revelation to the professor or technician of what he is in for, and an understanding on his part that he must be willing to take the requisite risks.

2. It is possible for any training staff to encourage preoccupation with what is "going on" in the program -- if the right kind of people are running it -- people who understand (a) something about how people learn, (b) a lot about the Peace Corps, (c) something about the trainees and what makes them tick.

3. Extensive preplanning is also possible -- probably within certain limits. At the very least, early involvement on something other than a casual basis of all the personnel who are to participate in it would make a large difference in the overall environment of training anywhere. Or, alternatively, a university might employ a core staff of ex-Volunteers (as many as eight or ten) some months in advance of the beginning of a program and put them to work planning the program along lines described in the opening section of this paper or along any lines they devised, for that matter.

4. If there is a confident, well-integrated core staff, it is possible anywhere to give trainees much more responsibility than they normally have had in Peace Corps training for the form and content of their training experience.

5. It is possible to give trainees much more free time than has been customary -- time for reading, spontaneous discussion, for independent research of all kinds, and even for plain old thinking.

6. The Peace Corps Training Center in Puerto Rico may be a uniquely appropriate place for training Volunteers for life in Latin America, but even university-operated programs need not in every case be conducted on college campuses, which represent the worst kind of transitional environment. Universities could, if they were so disposed, house trainees in camps, in abandoned military installations, or even in run-down hotels or boarding houses, where more nearly relevant training experiences could be devised and implemented.

Any Peace Corps training program is doomed to fail if it is not planned as a transitional experience. Everything in the program should be designed to help the trainees adjust and work effectively overseas -- <u>everything</u>. The emphasis should be on independent work, on autonomy, on helping the trainee to develop his self-starting capacity, and on treating him, his preoccupations, and his drive toward independence, with respect.

The emphasis throughout a training program of the kind I have described should be on "cultural distance." For example, it is exceedingly difficult to create cultural distance from the standard undergraduate milieu when a Peace Corps training program is conducted on a college campus, especially when the locale of the program consists of air-conditioned college dormitories and classrooms with raised platforms. To carry this

further, there is little cultural distance when the classes the trainees are subjected to in the Peace Corps program differ only slightly in approach or subject matter from standard college classes. When the trainees are subjected to the same kinds of restriction on their freedom of movement that undergraduates at a university must endure, they may have some reason to conclude that the Peace Corps training program merely represents more of the same. There must be differences, and the differences must reside not just in the subject matter of the program but in the way in which the program is designed, in the methodology used, in the total process of the program, in the way in which the staff members and teachers relate to and involve themselves with the trainees. It may be that any kind of change from the previous experience of the trainees represents good training in the broadest sense of the term. In adjusting to new demands on his ingenuity and autonomy, the trainee learns to deal with the kinds of problems he will have to deal with as a volunteer.

It is true, of course, that a considerable amount of "cultural distance" is built into the physical and social environment of the Puerto Rico training center, but this does not mean, it seems to me, that universities or other training institutions might not create or design training situations or environmental media which would create a substantial cultural distance.

Conclusion

The success of the programs described here led the staff to feel both the self-confidence and the humility that constitute, in delicate balance, the effective teacher. The teachers at the Training Center believe in what they are doing. They are excited by it. They comprise, with the trainees, what Jerome Bruner called recently a "community of learning." Their efforts more and more are directed toward activating a "will to learn" in the trainees, toward creating an environment that enlists what Bruner calls "the natural energies that sustain spontaneous learning -- curiosity, a desire for competence,

2

aspiration to emulate a model, and a deep-seated commitment to the web of social reciprocity."

This is heady stuff. I commend it to all trainers who are helping people learn how to work and live effectively overseas.